

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 28, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write with disappointment that critical infrastructure needs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will not receive significant federal funding through the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) administered American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to make high-speed rail improvements. Of the \$8 billion in high-speed rail funding which was announced, Pennsylvania's share amounts to only one-third of one percent.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PENNDOT) submitted for consideration three high speed rail projects totaling \$3.1 billion. We are informed that of this overall request, approximately \$26 million has been allocated to Pennsylvania to improve the Amtrak line between Harrisburg and Philadelphia and for a study to extend rail service from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh. We have advocated for these projects and appreciate this support from DOT. However, we are concerned that Pennsylvania, our Nation's sixth most populous state and home to some of the country's most traveled roads and rails, will receive less than one percent of the \$8 billion awarded for high speed rail projects.

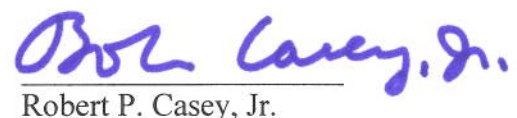
PENNDOT applied for \$401 million for the Lackawanna Cutoff project to restore passenger rail service from Scranton, PA to New York City. This project would create over 4,300 jobs and enhance connectivity between northern major economic centers and northeastern Pennsylvania labor markets, which is currently constrained by severe congestion. Additionally, PENNDOT requested funding for the Pittsburgh High-Speed Magnetic Levitation Project to design and construct a magnetic levitation rail line between the Pittsburgh International Airport and Downtown Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh maglev project represents a critical investment in a next-generation transportation technology that produces no emissions and uses a third of the energy of conventional rail. This project would create over 2,500 jobs including in the steel industry and in the building trades which have been hard hit in the economic downturn.

Both of these projects, which were not funded in this round, would contribute significantly to accomplishing national goals of improving mobility, expanding transportation options, easing congestion and creating jobs. Accordingly, we strongly urge you to support the Lackawanna Cutoff and Pittsburgh Maglev as part of any future DOT competitive grant program. We look forward to meeting with you next week to discuss how we can work together to advance these projects.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.


Arlen Specter

Sincerely,


Robert P. Casey, Jr.